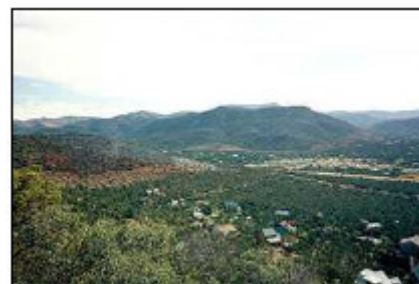


Hazardous Fuels and Fire Preparedness ~ Central, Utah

Funding provided through the National Fire Plan helped save the small southwestern Utah town of Central in 2004. Private landowners, the town, the BLM, the Utah Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands, and the U.S. Forest Service worked as a team under a chartered organization called The Color Country Fuels Committee to prepare for the possibility of wildfire.

Building Partnerships: Central is one of the top ten communities at risk in Utah; the committee led a project to create a fuelbreak around the town and acquire equipment and training for the volunteer fire department.



The Community Fire Council persuaded residents to implement the treatment – and just in time. Hazardous fuels and vegetation were removed in a swath around the town in the spring, providing a buffer between homes and dense piñon-juniper woodland.

Protecting the Town: Lightning ignited the Cal Hollow Fire northwest of the town on August 12 and forced the evacuation of about 100 homes. The fuelbreak slowed the fire and it laid down. “That gave us a chance to get the airtankers there, said Fire Warden Bill Murphy. “The fuelbreak was the key. It put the fire on the ground and gave us time.”



In less than five hours, the fire was contained and residents returned to their homes. No one was hurt, and no structures were lost.

Preparedness: First to reach the fire was the Central Volunteer Fire Department with two wildland engines, personal protective equipment, and wildland fire training provided by National Fire Plan funding through the Rural Fire Assistance and Volunteer Fire Assistance programs; it helped prepare these volunteers by providing the equipment and training they needed.

Agencies involved hope the survival of Central will motivate others to support hazardous fuels reduction on neighboring public lands and in their own backyards.

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